

**Alberta
Cattle
Commission**

Call Us At
(403) 275-4400

GRASS

ROUTES



The Alberta cattle producer newsletter.

Inside

2

- Market Development
- Beef Education for Chefs

3

- Fall Producer Meetings
- Trichomoniasis Study

4

- Stand Up! Speak Out!

Did you know?

A recent study at the Lacombe Research Station comparing barley and corn-fed cattle found an advantage for barley feeding. In taste panels barley-fed beef had an 85 per cent acceptability rating for tenderness and 100 per cent for juiciness, while corn-fed beef had a 60 per cent acceptability rating for tenderness and 89 per cent for juiciness.



New beef promotion tested in Alberta

Calgary is host to a summer campaign trying some new ideas

Calgary was the test site of a summer beef promotion that could serve as a template for future national beef campaigns. The program featured transit ads, radio advertising, extra retail featuring, couponing and in-store demonstrations as elements of the sales strategy.

This is a new approach to deliver beef's taste appeal. Taste is the number one reason people eat beef and choose it over pork, chicken and fish.

The transit ads combined with drive home radio ads to stimulate a craving for beef and improve sales. This is the first time the Beef

Information Centre (B.I.C.) has used transit advertising.

The reason for the intensive promotion is that beef supplies were at a maximum this summer. Beef supplies were up five per cent last year and so far this year are up eight per cent. Supplies are up due to more marketings and from the trend to larger cattle. Carcass weights were 20 lbs heavier last year averaging in at 717 lbs, up from 697 lbs in 1993. These large supplies of beef are competing with plentiful and inexpensive pork

See **New summer beef promotion**, Page 2

Beef consumption increases as demand is steady

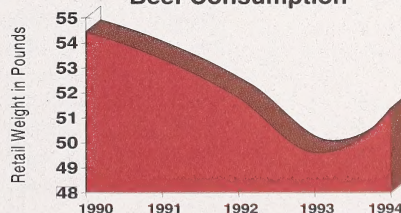
According to recently released Statistics Canada figures, beef consumption in Canada increased by 1.8 pounds per capita in 1994. But more importantly, beef demand held firm.

Consumer demand is how much product people are willing to purchase at various prices. For example, if both price and consumption increase, demand is positive.

Beef demand in Canada was strong last year. Statistics show that retail beef prices increased almost one per cent between 1993 and 1994. At the same time, per capita

consumption experienced the largest increase since the early 1980s. The Beef Information Centre is predicting another increase in consumption for 1995.

**Canadian Per Capita
Beef Consumption**



Strength from the ground up.

Foodservice manual

The Alberta Cattle Commission is developing a new beef foodservice manual to help train chefs and meat buyers about Canadian beef. A focus group consisting of producers, retailers and foodservice representatives identified different areas to improve beef marketing. One area was chef education. A working group has been formed from culinary schools and the foodservice sector to develop the manual. The project will be completed in the fall and distributed to cooking schools and chefs throughout Canada.



Improving trade a key summer activity

Asian Trade Mission

The fortunes of Canadian beef continue to improve in Asia according to the Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF). Members of CBEF recently returned from a two week trade mission to Taiwan and South Korea where they received strong, positive reaction from importers and distributors. In 1993, Canadian beef exports to Taiwan amounted to 264 metric tonnes. This year it will rise to 500 tonnes and by the year 2000, the forecast is for 4,000 tonnes, equivalent to 24,000 head of cattle. In Korea, Canadian beef sales will increase 150 per cent this year. By the year 2000, sales are forecast to reach 14,000 tonnes annually or equivalent to 70,000 feeder cattle.

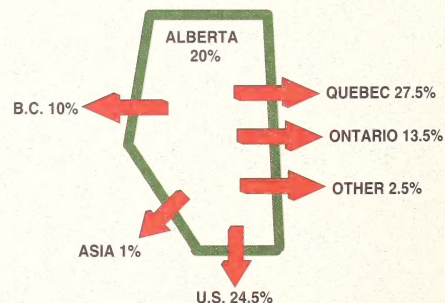
Asian Buyers Hosted

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) market development committee recently hosted a delegation of Japanese meat buyers, touring southern ranches, auction markets and feedlots. The tour was designed to show production systems and Alberta's willingness to form lasting relationships with the buyers. The ACC also worked with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada to introduce delegation members to grading and inspection systems before they toured packing plants across Canada. Members of the mission included retailers, chefs and journalists. The retailers are responsible for 25 per cent of the beef imported to Japan.

Quebec Trade Mission

ACC Market Development Chairman, Dale Wilson of Rosedale, visited major Ontario and Quebec retailers and foodservice purveyors. Each year the market development committee undertakes an eastern trade mission to observe how Alberta beef is positioned in those markets, discuss beef marketing issues with those on the frontline, and report market development opportunities to the ACC.

DISTRIBUTION OF ALBERTA BEEF - 1994



New summer beef promotion, continued

and chicken.

Retailers are key to stimulating sales. Both Calgary Superstore and Calgary Co-op were involved with extra sales incentives; these two chains advertised their weekly specials on a 10 second tag at the end of the B.I.C.'s radio ads. As well, all major chains (45 Calgary stores) carried the B.I.C.'s *Barbecue Expert* promotion that has gone into over 2,000 stores across Canada. The new barbecue brochure included coupons

partnered with Heinz products.

The radio promotions offered a variety of contests with prizes ranging from two days at a dude ranch to backyard *Sizzle and Splash* hot tub parties. One promotion featured a 30 minute radio phone-in show with a B.I.C. staff member.

The B.I.C. gathered purchase data to compare sales before, during and after the promotion. The data will be used in developing future campaign strategies.



Humane transportation review

Last year the federal government initiated a review of the livestock and poultry transportation system in Canada. The federal government recently published a national discussion document which has been sent to all stakeholders for consideration. The Alberta Foundation for Animal Care (the Alberta Cattle Commission is a founding member) has been very active in the review process. The document proposes a one-year-trial quality management process where education, inspection and enforcement is increased to ensure livestock are transported in a humane manner.

Producer meetings are your opportunity

Exercise your right to determine the direction of the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) at this year's producer meetings and elections October 25 to November 9.

This is an opportunity to express your views on the cattle industry and to ensure that the producers elected share your vision. The elections are the democratic basis of the ACC. The success of the Commission depends on producers taking the time to get involved. Attending the fall meetings is an effective way to influence the direction and operation of the ACC.

The election meetings also provide a

good opportunity to hear firsthand what the ACC is doing with your check-off dollars. An in-depth summary of the past year's activities will be provided. You will have the opportunity to express your views and ask any questions.

Watch for the November edition of *Grass Routes* in your mail which contains the ACC's annual report and a complete listing of election meeting locations, dates and candidates around the province. Meeting announcements will also be printed in your local weekly newspaper. For more information call (403) 275-4400.

Trichomoniasis study to measure effect in Alberta

A study to accurately measure the prevalence of Trichomoniasis in Alberta is being funded by the Alberta Cattle Commission, Alberta Agriculture and Pfizer Animal Health in consultation with the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association. Producers will be able to use the information to control the disease and to measure the effectiveness of these efforts over the near term.

The study is in response to producer concerns about the spread of the parasitic venereal disease across Alberta. Highly publicized outbreaks in three community pastures and one private herd in Alberta followed 23 confirmed outbreaks in PFRA, community, provincial and private pastures in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Although Trichomoniasis has been a problem in Montana and Idaho since the late 1800s and suspected in Saskatchewan for the last 20 years, it is not known if it is a major herd health problem in Alberta. Veterinary diagnostic summaries do not tell the full story because bulls and cows were not routinely tested for Trichomoniasis. As more and more

producers test bulls for Trichomoniasis, veterinarians will have a better idea if the disease is spreading or is within historical norms. In addition, diagnostic tests for Trichomoniasis do not distinguish the disease from Vibriosis and Campylobacter - bacterial venereal infections that result in the same symptoms.

The study will be carried out in 32 provincial grazing reserves in Alberta. On average, 1,438 bulls and about 55,000 cows grazing these pastures each year are potentially at risk. All bulls exiting provincial grazing reserves will be tested using a technique designed to detect 80-90 per cent of Trichomoniasis infected bulls.

The economic impact of Trichomoniasis in infected herds will be assessed by recording calving rates reported by provincial grazing reserve patrons. Economic impacts for producers with cows at both provincial grazing reserves and on private pastures will be assessed through producer information on pregnancy rates gathered through Alberta Public Lands animal producer surveys.



Producers asked to Stand Up! Speak Out!

Producers often hear that the facts about their industry are misrepresented or not understood by the public. Often frustration is focused towards the media, but this does not help solve the problem of increasing the public's knowledge of agriculture.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has introduced a new communications program called **STAND UP! SPEAK OUT!**. The intent of the program is to involve the producer in providing correct information to the community and news media.

We realize that most cattle producers are not professional communicators but no one else can be as credible and passionate about the business as producers. This program is intended to give producers the tools to stand up and speak out with facts and authority.

The **STAND UP! SPEAK OUT!** approach

uses real life experiences to teach and practice methods to deal with misinformation. The training session runs about three hours and provides a complete overview of how the media works, how to work with the media and how to keep your community informed. In addition, a comprehensive workbook is provided which will be kept current with issues and tips for those members participating in the program.

The program is available to groups of 15 and up. Cost depends on the number of people enrolled, but all materials are free of charge. For more information call Peggy Strankman at the Canadian Cattlemen's Association at (403) 275-8558 or 1-800-381-5546.

New Special Places 2000 satisfactory
The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is pleased with changes made to the Special Places 2000 policy and now endorses the process. The revised policy shifts from a preservation to a balanced conservation focus. The ACC was successful in having a representative appointed to the Special Places 2000 provincial coordinating committee which reviews all applications for Special Places status.

Water quality initiatives

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) is working with the departments of Environmental Protection and Alberta Agriculture on the issue of cow/calf and small feedlot impacts on surface water quality. The cattle industry has the opportunity to address problem areas before regulatory or legislative solutions are needed.

Once a problem area is identified, local producers will lead an awareness campaign in conjunction with the ACC, Environmental Protection and Alberta Agriculture. Educational materials and, where necessary, site visits will be offered to help individual producers lessen the impact of their operations on surface water. Often remedial measures are inexpensive and have other management benefits as well.

Producers interested in these materials or who want more information on the program can call the ACC office at (403) 275-4400.

Do you know the Facts?

Do cattle pollute the water and destroy the ozone? Is beef unhealthy? You probably know that isn't the case but how would you answer those questions? Your cattle organization can help with the latest version of **Just Facts** - an information kit about the cattle industry and environmental and consumer issues. Since it was first developed in 1989, the Alberta Cattle Commission has distributed over 15,000 copies of **Just Facts** to media, government, schools, students and others.

ACC Market Information Service

Slaughter Cattle Information
(403) 274-4340

Feeder Cattle Information
(403) 274-4345